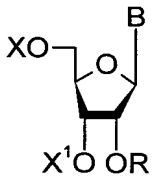
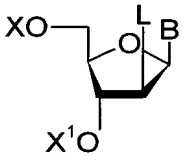
Amendments to the Claims:

The following claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in this application (in the unlikely event that no claims follow herein, the previously pending claims will remain):

1. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (1):



which comprises reacting a compound of formula (2):



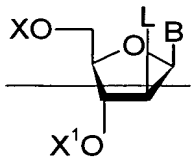
with a compound of formula $Al(OR)_3$, under substantially anhydrous conditions wherein:

X, and ~~X²~~ X^1 are each independently H or a protecting group;

B is a ~~base~~ nucleobase; and

R is an alkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group, each of which may be ~~optionally~~ unsubstituted or substituted by one or more of halogen or amino substituents; and

~~which comprises reacting a compound of formula (2):~~



~~wherein~~

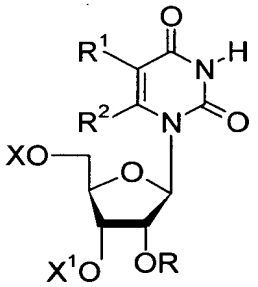
L is a leaving group~~; and~~

~~B, X and X' X^1 are as defined above~~

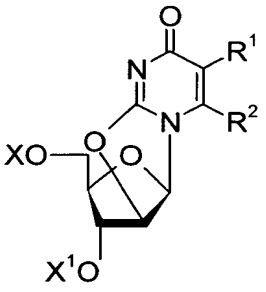
~~with a compound of formula $Al(OR)_3$ wherein R is as defined above, under substantially anhydrous conditions~~.

2. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the leaving group is selected from the group consisting of $-OSO_2CH_3$, $-OSO_2CF_3$, Cl, Br, I, O-Mesyl, O-Brosyl, O-Tosyl and the ~~base~~ nucleobase, B, chemically bonded to the 2'-position, via an oxygen or sulphur atom or a moiety of formula $-NR^x-$, wherein R^x is H or a C_{1-6} alkyl or an aryl group.

3. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (3):



which comprises reacting a compound of formula (4)



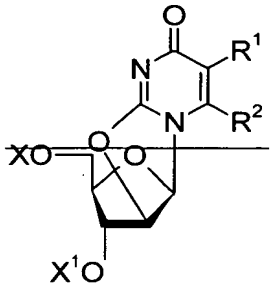
with a compound of formula $Al(OR)_3$, under substantially anhydrous conditions wherein:

X, and ~~X²~~ X^1 are each independently H or a protecting group;

R^1 and R^2 are each independently H, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, or halogen; and

R is an alkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group, each of which may be ~~optionally~~ unsubstituted or substituted by one or more of halogen or amino substituents

~~which comprises the reaction of a compound of formula (4)~~



~~wherein~~

~~X, X' X^1, R^1 and R^2 are as defined above;~~

~~with a compound of formula Al(OR)$_3$ wherein R is as defined above, under substantially anhydrous conditions~~.

4. (Original) A process according to claim 3, wherein R^1 and R^2 are both H, or R^1 is C_{1-4} alkyl, and R^2 is H.

5. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1 or claim 3, wherein R is a C_{1-4} alkenyl group, a C_{1-4} alkyl group, a C_{1-4} alkyoxyC_{1-4} alkyl group or a C_{1-4} alkynyl group.

B1 cont'd

6. (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein R is a methoxyethyl group.

7. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 for the preparation of a compound of Formula (1) wherein B represents cytosine, or a substituted derivative thereof, which comprises:

a) preparing ~~a~~ said compound of Formula (1) wherein B represents uracil, or a substituted derivative thereof~~, by a process according to claim 1~~; and

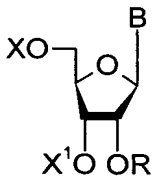
b) converting the uracil moiety to the equivalent cytosine moiety~~; or~~

~~c) preparing a compound of Formula (3) by a process according to claim 2; and~~

~~d) converting the uracil moiety therein to a cytosine moiety~~.

8. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of a product oligonucleotide which comprises the coupling to a nucleoside or an oligonucleotide of a compound prepared by a process according to any one ~~preceding claim~~ of claims 1, 3, 7 or 9.

9. (New) A process for the preparation of a compound of Formula (1)



wherein X and X^1 are each, independently, H or a protecting group;
R is an alkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group, each of which may be unsubstituted or substituted by one or more of halogen or amino substituents; and
B represents cytosine, or a substituted derivative thereof;
which comprises

a) preparing a compound of formula (3), by a process according to claim 3; and

b) converting the uracil moiety to the equivalent cytosine moiety.

B7 cont'd

10. (New) A process according to claim 1 or claim 3, wherein X and X^1 each represent H.

11. (New) A process according to claim 1 or claim 3, wherein at least one of X and X^1 represent said protecting group.

12. (New) A process according to claim 11, wherein the protecting group or groups are selected from the group consisting of acid labile protecting groups, acid-labile acetal protecting groups; and base labile-protecting groups.

13. (New) A process according to claim 1, wherein the leaving group L is selected from the group consisting of $-OSO_2CH_3$, $-OSO_2CF_3$, Cl, Br, I, O-Mesyl, O-Brosyl, and O-Tosyl.

B7 concld

14. (New) A process according to claim 1, wherein the leaving group L is a pyrimidine.